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AN EPISTLE

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Charles Montague,

CHANCELLOUR

OF THE

EXCHEQUER, &c.

UPON THE

General Peace.

Carmen amat Quisquis Carmine digna gerit.

LONDON,

Printed, and are to be Sold by *E. Whitlock*, near *Stationer's-Hall*, 1698.

19. Febr. 7.

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WHAT ſhall the KING the Nation's Genius raiſe,
And more than Rival our Great EDWARD'S *Days?*
Yet not one Muſe worthy a Conquerour's Name
Attend his Triumphs, and record His Fame?
While thus, O *MONTAGUE*, You preſs the Age,
While thus You fill Your ev'ry wondrous Page.
The high Complaint (that well might be redreſt,
By Your choice Pen) juſt in It ſelf's confeſt.
Sir, in Your happy Strains of poliſht Wit,
The Greateſt HERO's Actions ſhou'd be writ.

Embroiling War no longer will excuſe,
The HERO's Arms give leiſure to Your Muſe.
Thro' Dangers He has paſt that Ours may ceaſe,
Yield Him the Fruit of His own Glorious Peace:
I, while I chearfully ſuſtain my Part,
Show the weak Duty of a Faithful Heart.
My willing Muſe falls ſhort of Her Deſign,
I cannot reach my HERO at the *Boyn*.
You, Sir, who by indulgent Heav'n are bleſt,
With Fires Divinely kindled in Your Breaſt,
Shall the high Proweſs of the KING relate,
How He redeem'd, thro' Winter-Seas, our State,
And reſcu'd trembling *Europe*, as from Fate.

Much

Much have the Foreign *Drydens* prais'd a Prince
For ſeizing Towns that are ſurrender'd ſince:
Will the prodigious Dawbers blot their Rhimes,
Or claſh with All Hiſtorians of the Times?
Or ſhall the Reader fancy Truth's expreſt
By way of Contrary, and bitter Jeſt?
Who now holds *Luxemburg*, *Dinant*, *Cazal*,
Mons, *Barcelona*, *Limerick* and *Kinſale*?
Friburg, *Namure*, *Giron*? What Sea or Land
Has not obtain'd the Aid of *WILLIAM*'s ſaving Hand?

Great Heroes, who by valiant Acts intend
The World's chief Good, ſtill Virtue's Cauſe defend:
And their Humanity to Heaven raiſe,
Are the true Subjects of the Muſes praiſe.
But ſtrange! Our Age abounds in Men of Rhime,
Who, had they had their Beings in the Time
Of Flaming *Rome*, wou'd not have fail'd to find
That *Nero* was a Bleſſing to Mankind.
This ſaid, in Noble *MONTAGUE* I trace
A Mind that's highly equal to His Race:
Sir, Your untainted Muſe is fit to ſing
The fam'd Atchievements of the juſteſt KING,
Who in the *Tarquins* ſtruck a panick Dread,
Gives wild Ambition Law, and fears the *Hydra*'s Head.

Nature in the ſame Courſe goes mildly on,
As to breed Monſters She's not often known,
So in Gifts greatly to diſtinguiſh Men,
She ſeldom likes; Few by the Sword or Pen
Have won Eternal Bays; if in our Age,
A Never-equall'd HERO treads the Stage,
Wou'd the Excelling *MONTAGUE* omit
To celebrate the KING with all the Pow'rs of Wit?
Sir, to His Glorious Acts Your Muſe ſhall raiſe
A Monument of vaſt uncommon Praiſe.
Our Authors write what equally fits All
Who under Their expoſing Praiſes fall;
Like the Engraver who impos'd a Head
On *Charles*, which yet for *Cromwell* had been made.
Hence 'tis that all our Heroes are the ſame.
But to Record the Everlaſting Fame
Of the Young Leader, who by forcing far
In the *Foe's* Country, freed His Own from War;
Of the Deep Stateſman, who cou'd beſt perform
The Pilot's Part in an amazing Storm;
Of the Good Prince, who in all Actions ſhows
A ſtrict Regard to Laws, to Oaths and Vows;
Of the Undaunted Hero, who reſtor'd
Our Arms and Rights, drew His Avenging Sword,
Is *Europe*'s UMPIRE, and the *Ocean*'s LORD:

Sir,

Sir, when by You this Noble Theme is writ
In Mightier Verſe, all Ages ſhall admit,
From the juſt Wonders that Your Muſe ſhall ſing,
This is Great *WILLIAM* only; 'Tis the KING.

As nothing can more Indignation raiſe,
Than the unmanly Flatt'ry and vile Praiſe
Which ſome fam'd Authors from a laviſh Pen,
Shed in full Pages on the worſt of Men,
To Learning's Scandal, to the utmoſt Shame
Of Poets, and Their once much-honour'd Name:
So They, who of Great Actions greatly write,
To Virtue every Reader's Breaſt excite:
Princes ev'n charm'd, have often wiſht their own
Atchievements cou'd deſerve a like Renown,
That far out-laſts what's carv'd in Braſs or Stone:
But in this gen'rous Taſk (for who ſhall claim
NASSAW's Degree, His high Deſert of Fame)
The ſtill ſevereſt Check that Poets meet,
Is the imperfect Virtue of the Great.
What Work more Glorious had the World beheld?
How had the *Mantuan* Muſe Herſelf excell'd?
If to another *Rome* had been enſlav'd,
And by *Auguſtus* from the Tyrant ſav'd.
Tho' *Maro*'s Fancy's both exact and vaſt,
With his Sixth Book the Nobleſt Matter's paſt;
When *Latium* is the Scene, when various Fate
Comes on more nearly to the *Roman* State;
Tho' his deep Muſe does an unequall'd Part,
All could not be ſupply'd or turn'd by Art.
To have deſcrib'd a HERO, who enclin'd,
From a Great Soul, ſhow'r'd Freedom on Mankind,
While the aſſembled Nations own'd his Cauſe,
And bleſt his Name for their defended Laws,
The Poet had too groſs a Favour ſhown,
And ſad Proſcriptions in his Face had ſhown.

Sir, if the fineſt Flattery's a Crime,
What Cenſure's due to paultry fawning Rhime,
The long and heavy Grievance of our Time?
'Tis a kind Fate, Sir, on your Gen'rous Vein,
That you may truly ſhow a HERO without Stain.
But of all Poets they are moſt unbleſt,
And have with the worſt Grace their Praiſe expreſt,
Who live to ſee the cruel ſpightful Day,
When their exalted Heroes run away.

To our Victorious Monarch 'twere a Wrong,
Shou'd he not now be honour'd in our Tongue;
Which to a Foreign has diſdain'd to yield,
While the intrepid HERO was our Shield,
And led our dreaded LION to the Field.

Language, as Nations either grow or fail,
In their Renown, must more or less prevail,
What Limits to our Ile? Our mighty Name
Has far and near employ'd the Wings of weary'd Fame.
Europe, the Southern *Tropick*, feel our Pow'rs,
And *Indian* Subjects view our floating Tow'rs.
In vain the *Foe* remarkt with envious Hate
The well-fixt Greatness of our Antient State:
By Turns our Neighbours have our Aid receiv'd,
The now-checkt *Lilly* has been hence reliev'd;
The World's long Wonder we in Glory stand,
Only in debt to Heav'n, and *WILLIAM*'s Heav'n-like Hand.

If some who write still urge our Native Tongue
Wants a due Grace, and favours not their Song;
Language, tho' fine, is as the Shell of Thought,
Nor with It to the Ballance shou'd be brought:
They rather for their Task appear unfit;
The *English* Tongue is Good, but they want Wit.
By Nature they're no Poets, nor can raise
Their groveling Genius to a HERO's Praise.

Still they are pardon'd who in any Art
Add to their Labour a desiring Heart,
Yet fail when they attempt their Noblest Part,
As *Kneller* draws the King, but vainly tries
To paint the charming Courage of his Eyes:
As some who carry an Esteem of Wit,
Below the fam'd *Namure* and trembling *Maez* have writ.
Sir, if the Painter ever takes a Great
Or Happy Image from the Muse's Heat;
If Poets Rival Poets; if we find
That others Thoughts inspire the searching Mind;
Your Verse shall stir the Age, and best record
The striking Justice of our MONARCH's Sword,
With a wish'd Fate your lofty Muse shall dare,
And represent *NASSAW* in Scenes of Pow'rful War.

Your Candour, Sir, I doubt not will excuse
The pressing Friendship of a Loyal Muse:
The Task, in which all Mast'ry must be shown,
I thought was plainly left to You alone.
Sir, of the greatest Wonders while you write,
You shall with Judgment soar to Fancy's Height:
You to Itself shall *WILLIAM*'s Prowess raise,
And wreath the POET's in the CONQUEROUR's Bays.

FINIS.